

# 11th Edition

## Mayor-Sponsored Charter Schools Pre-Opening Checklist



[Spring 2013]

**City of Indianapolis  
Mayor's Office  
Pre-Opening Visit Checklist**

This checklist will be used by the Mayor's Office to determine an organization's readiness to begin operation as a charter school. The checklist items will be collected in three phases by representatives of the Mayor's Office. Each phase must be completed before moving forward to the next. This will allow the Mayor's Office the opportunity to monitor school readiness for opening and will provide schools time to address any identified weaknesses and establish contingency plans as needed before school begins. Schools must complete all three phases before being granted authorization to begin serving students.

**Areas addressed in this checklist:**

- I. Governance & Management
- II. Staffing
- III. Curriculum & Instruction
- IV. Students & Parents
- V. Operations
- VI. Facilities, Furnishings, & Equipment

**Explanation of table:**

Review Period: The pre-opening review will take place in three phases. Specific checklist items will be reviewed during specified review periods as appropriate and noted in the guide below. Additional reviews or follow-up may take place as needed on a case by case basis.

Documentation: Where appropriate, the school may determine the suitable type of documentation to provide. In most cases, however, the documentation listed is that which the Mayor's office expects to review.

Status and Follow-up Actions: At the time of review, the school and Mayor's office together will determine any mutually agreed upon follow-up that must occur if the status of a particular item is noted as anything other than "complete."

Completion verified: Once an items is verified as satisfactorily complete, the Mayor's office will note it as such.

**PHASE I:**

**Phase I generally begins upon the City-County Council's ratification of a school's charter approval. A Mayor's office representative will be assigned as the point of contact for the school and will set up an initial meeting with school leadership.**

**Governance & Management**

Area of review	Documentation	Status and follow-up actions	Completion verified
Permanent head(s) of school named and providing leadership for the school, and other key leadership roles in the school have been filled	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Organizational chart</li><li>• Contract(s) and/or offer letters for school leader and key administrators</li></ul>		
Board of Directors established and setting policy direction for the school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Meeting minutes from at least one board meeting within the last 60 days</li><li>• Current resumes for all board members</li><li>• Evidence that board training has occurred or is scheduled to occur from a vendor approved by the Mayor's Office</li></ul>		

<p>hool has adopted proper internal financial and accounting controls</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During Phase One of the Pre-Opening process, the school must retain an independent certified public accountant or independent certified public accounting firm licensed in Indiana to perform an agreed-upon procedures engagement (the “Independent Accountants’ Report”) in accordance with attestation standards established by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants. The purpose of the engagement will be to assist the Mayor’s office in evaluating the Initial Statement and supporting schools in setting up their internal controls properly. The procedures to be performed should include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Procedure #1: Obtain a copy of the accounting procedures manual of the school and read it to ascertain whether it includes accounting procedures for the preparation of the school’s financial statement in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles for not-for-profit organizations.</li> <li>• Procedure #2: Read the accounting manual to ascertain whether it includes payroll procedures for the school and whether the school will hire an outside vendor to process the payroll.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Procedure #3: Read the accounting manual to ascertain whether it includes procedures for accounting for contributions and grants.</li> <li>• Procedure #4: Read the available trial balance and documentation supporting cash receipts, cash disbursements and payroll expenses to observe the status of implementation of the accounting procedures.</li> <li>• Procedure #5: Identify and interview the person(s) responsible for financial management of the school regarding the existence of procedures for the creation and review by management of quarterly financial reports.</li> <li>• Procedure #6: Interview the person(s) responsible for financial management of the school regarding the existence of appropriate internal financial controls and procedures, including procedures related to ensuring that transactions are properly authorized, assets are safeguarded against unauthorized or improper use, and transactions are properly recorded and reported.</li> <li>• Board-approved, written description of the school's financial management</li> </ul>		
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	<p>policies, including the board's process for approving expenditures, plan for preparing financial statements in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles and requirements as set forth by Indiana's State Board of Accounts (SBOA), payroll procedures, accounting for contributions and grants, procedures for the creation and review of quarterly financial statements, which shall specifically identify the individual who will be responsible for preparing such financial statements, and appropriate internal financial controls and procedures</p>		
National criminal background checks completed for all current board members (IC 20-26-5-10)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Background check authorizations and results are on file (Note: For the duration of the school's operation, these checks must also be completed 14 days prior to the approval of any new board members.)</li> </ul>		
Determination of tax-exempt status from the IRS has been received (Charter Sec 3.1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Letter from IRS documenting tax-exempt status and number</li> </ul>		

### Staffing

Area of review	Documentation	Status and follow-up actions	Completion verified
Number of teachers is adequate and assignments match the staffing plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Written staffing plan outlining number of staff at each grade level and all administrative positions</li> </ul>		
Documentation of clear lines of authority and responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Position descriptions</li> <li>Organizational chart</li> </ul>		

### Curriculum & Instruction

Area of review	Documentation	Status and follow-up actions	Completion verified
Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Detailed, specific summary of curriculum (only if modifications have been made from initial charter application)</li> </ul>		
Comprehensive Special Education Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Action plan developed by the administrators ensuring that special education students will be served appropriately at the school</li> <li>Evidence that enrollment process effectively identifies students with special needs (e.g., enrollment forms, records request forms, etc.)</li> <li>Copy of the student handbook briefly describing the philosophy, supports and procedures for special education services</li> </ul>		

### Students & Families

Area of review	Documentation	Status and follow-up actions	Completion verified
Documentation of recruiting and admission process for the upcoming school year (Charter Section 17.7) 2 months before enrollment lottery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Documentation of recruitment strategies, application procedures, and lottery and waitlist process</li> <li>Evidence of equal opportunities and access for students with exceptional needs</li> </ul>		
Student policies (including suspension and expulsion policies) have been established and are available to students and parents in written form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Copy of the student handbook which includes suspension and expulsion policies</li> </ul>		

## Operations

Area of review	Documentation	Status and follow-up actions	Completion verified
Arrangements have been made for food services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Food or vendor services contract</li> <li>Evidence a Marion County Health Department inspection has been scheduled and an application has been submitted to the Marion County Health Department</li> </ul>		
School safety and emergency preparedness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence that the Department of Public Works has been contacted and request has been made for the installation of school zone/speed limit signs</li> </ul>		

## Facilities, Furnishings & Equipment

Area of review	Documentation	Status and follow-up actions	Completion verified
Insurance coverage for Commercial General liability and Umbrella liability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Certificates of insurance for Commercial General liability and Umbrella liability (Coverages take effect no later than effective date of acquisition of physical plant)</li> </ul>		
Organizer has acquired, through purchase, lease or otherwise, the location and facility for the school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Purchase or lease agreement</li> </ul>		
The creation of a timeline for renovating or completing the facility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Copy of comprehensive plan outlining proposed dates for completion of construction or renovation of facility</li> </ul>		
The necessary steps are being taken to ensure all inspections are completed in a timely manner prior to opening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence inspections have been scheduled with: State Department of Health, Marion County Health Department, State Fire Marshall, Indianapolis Fire Department and City Building Inspector (the City</li> </ul>		



	<p>Inspector only if renovating an existing facility or the facility is new construction)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence that all inspections are to be completed no later than two weeks prior to school opening</li> </ul>		
All required zoning permits have been obtained	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Permits and certification for <b>ZONING</b> from the City of Indianapolis Department of Metropolitan Development and Department of Public Works deeming facility suitable for a school</li> </ul>		
All required land use permits have been obtained	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Permits and certification for <b>LAND USE</b> from the City of Indianapolis Department of Metropolitan Development and Department of Public Works deeming facility suitable for a school</li> </ul>		
All required building related permits have been obtained	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Permits and certification related to <b>BUILDING USE</b> from the City of Indianapolis Department of Metropolitan Development and Department of Public Works deeming facility suitable for a school</li> </ul>		

**PHASE II:**

**Phase II begins upon the culmination of Phase I, once the Mayor's Office has determined all required steps have been completed.**

**Governance & Management**

Area of review	Documentation	Status and follow-up actions	Completion verified
Financial Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 1-year cash flow plan identifying the sources of funds available to pay start-up costs and costs of operations prior to receipt of state and local tuition support</li><li>• 5-year detailed budget that also identifies start-up costs</li></ul>		
Board of Directors established and setting policy direction for the school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Description of board committee structure</li><li>• Copy of current board bylaws and board policies</li><li>• Documentation of processes for conducting evaluations for school leader</li><li>• Documentation of processes for evaluation of CMO or EMO</li></ul>		

**Staffing**

Area of review	Documentation	Status and follow-up actions	Completion verified
TRF and PERF (retirement benefits) are in place for appropriate staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Evidence that arrangements have been made for contributing to public retirement funds</li></ul>		

## Curriculum & Instruction

Area of review	Documentation	Status and follow-up actions	Completion verified
Instructional materials and supplies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence that materials and supplies are on order and will be delivered in time for school opening</li> </ul>		
School calendar (Charter Section 17.7)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comprehensive calendar that includes, for example, first and last days of school, days school closed for vacation or staff development, school make-up days due to inclement weather</li> </ul>		
Class schedules	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schedule of classes for each grade and/or subject area</li> </ul>		
Comprehensive Special Education Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comprehensive plan for how the school will deliver services to students with special needs. The plan must comply with all applicable state and federal laws. The plan should include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence that staff are on board to provide special needs services (all schools must have a special education teacher of record ON STAFF), and/or evidence that arrangements have been made for contracted services</li> <li>Evidence that the school administrators are aware of and adhere to best practices in meeting the needs of students with exceptional needs</li> <li>Evidence that supports are in place for all school staff and personnel to assist students with</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		

	<p>IEPs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sample of blank legal documentation to be utilized by the school for all special education procedures and processes</li> <li>• Proposed schedule or calendar for initial and move-in IEP meetings</li> <li>• Proposed plan for ensuring adequate special education staffing , plans for testing accommodations including and beyond ISTEP, NWEA, Acuity, or any other school wide assessments</li> <li>• Proposed school wide behavior support plan to be implemented</li> <li>• Accountability and liability measures in place with outside contractors providing special education services</li> <li>• Specifically address how procedures for due process and mediation hearings will be handled</li> <li>• Plan for aggregating data for exceptional needs across disability labels</li> <li>• Evidence of equal opportunities and access of students with exceptional needs</li> </ul>		
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## Students & Families

Area of review	Documentation	Status and follow-up actions	Completion verified
Procedures are in place for collecting students' prior school cumulative records and for securely storing student academic, attendance, special education, and discipline records	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence that procedures are in place for efficiently collecting students' records from sending schools</li> <li>• Evidence that specific procedures are in place for asking former school for any possible special education records for all enrolled students – school must demonstrate it is taking responsibility for ensuring special education records are obtained in a timely fashion (e.g., records request form signed by parents will be sent to both the school and the district office specifically requesting both cumulative and special education records; the records will be requested far in advance of the start of school; and the school has additional follow-up steps in place to ensure all records are received in a timely manner)</li> </ul>		
Electronic system for maintaining student records has been implemented (Charter Section 6.5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence that an electronic system is in place (information should be easily aggregated and disaggregated by race, gender, school corporation of residence, special education, free/reduced lunch, date of enrollment, date of withdrawal, previous schooling, etc.)</li> </ul>		

## Operations

Area of review	Documentation	Status and follow-up actions	Completion verified
School safety and emergency preparedness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Specific, detailed plan for preparing for/responding to emergencies that complies with applicable laws. Evacuation plan includes procedures for students with exceptional needs that ensure safety and dignity</li></ul>		
Provisions have been made for health services, screenings, and immunization records	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Evidence that health services are available (school nurse on staff or contract, contract with local health facility, etc)</li><li>• Written description that procedures are in place for administering student medications (e.g., specific staff members identified and trained to administer medication)</li></ul>		

**PHASE III:**

**Phase III is the final phase of the pre-opening process. All requirements listed within this phase must be satisfactorily completed no later than two weeks prior to the school's tentative opening date in order for the school to receive approval to begin serving students.**

**Staffing**

Area of review	Documentation	Status and follow-up actions	Completion verified
Number of teachers is adequate and their assignments match the staffing plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Teacher roster</li></ul>		
All staff positions have been filled and employment applications and contracts are on file for each staff member	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Signed contracts or offer letters</li></ul>		
Teaching staff hold teaching licenses in Indiana (IC 20-28-4) and national criminal background checks have been run on all staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Valid Indiana teacher's licenses (listing certification areas) for <b>all</b> teachers on staff – school must provide one of the following items: 1. copy of valid license; 2. letter from licensing advisor indicating that teacher is eligible to apply for license and evidence that the teacher has done so; 3. For teachers licensed by other states, 1 year reciprocal permit 4. Emergency Permit or Transition-to- Teaching permit listing area of certification for teachers on staff</li></ul>		
Special Education Teaching Staff (Teacher of Record)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Evidence of on-staff teacher of record licenses matching the special education labels of students expected/enrolled. Provide plan for filling any gaps in service areas if one exists</li><li>Signed contracts for special education teachers</li></ul>		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence that special education teachers hold valid certification in the state of Indiana</li> <li>• If special education teacher holds limited license or emergency permit, provide evidence of mentor with Indiana license and plan of license completion</li> </ul>		
Paraprofessionals meet requirements under No Child Left Behind	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence in staff files that paraprofessionals whose duties include instructional support have one of the following: 2 years of higher education; an associate's (or higher) degree</li> </ul>		
National Criminal background checks for all staff and volunteers have been completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence that National Criminal background checks have been conducted for all staff members and volunteers who have regular contact with children (including parent volunteers)</li> </ul>		

### Curriculum & Instruction

Area of review	Documentation	Status and follow-up actions	Completion verified
Instructional materials and supplies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence that materials and supplies are in stock in time for school opening</li> </ul>		



### Students & Families

Area of review	Documentation	Status and follow-up actions	Completion verified
Procedures are in place for collecting students' prior school cumulative and special education records and for securely storing student academic, attendance, and discipline records	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Evidence that procedures are in place for securely storing student academic, attendance, and discipline records, including but not limited to special education files and data</li></ul>		
Projected student enrollment (Charter Section 17.7)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Student roster with assigned grade levels and school corporations of residence</li></ul>		

### Operations

Area of review	Documentation	Status and follow-up actions	Completion verified
Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Final, detailed plan including copies of contracts</li><li>Evidence of plan for providing transportation specific to students with exceptional needs if required by IEP</li></ul>		
Arrangements have been made for food services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>License to serve food from Marion County Health Department</li></ul>		

### Facilities, Furnishings & Equipment

Area of review	Documentation	Status and follow-up actions	Completion verified
The necessary steps have been taken to ensure all inspections are completed in order for the school to open and that all buildings are universally accessible for students, families, and visitors with exceptional needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Copies of the final inspection reports from the following entities: State Department of Health, State Fire Marshall, Indianapolis Fire Department and City Building Inspector</li><li>Copy of the Certificate of Substantial</li></ul>		

	Completion submitted to the Dept. of Code Enforcement		
Mayor's office approval of physical plant will occur after a final walk through of the facility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Letter of approval is granted upon completion of Phase III of the pre-opening process</li> </ul>		